

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A scribing device for a brittle material substrate, which continuously heats a region along a line to be scribed on a surface of the brittle material substrate at a temperature lower than a softening point of the brittle material substrate and, also, continuously cools a region in the vicinity of the heated region, thereby forming a blind crack  
5 along said line to be scribed, the device comprising:

a light source;

a polarizing beam splitter splitting light from the light source based on a polarization state, said polarizing beam splitter transmitting the split light in a specific polarization direction;

an optical fiber arranged such that light transmitted through said polarizing beam splitter  
10 enters the region of the blind crack formation in the vicinity of the cooled region on the surface of said brittle material substrate and the light reflected by the blind crack is returned to said polarizing beam splitter;

a light reception element receiving reflected light from said blind crack via said polarizing beam splitter; and

15 a determination unit including a window comparator, said determination unit with said window comparator determining whether a level of light receiving signal obtained from said light reception element is between predetermined thresholds, wherein a shape state of the blind crack is determined based on an output from said determination unit.

2 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A scribing method for a brittle material substrate, in which a region along a line to be scribed on a surface of a brittle material substrate is continuously heated at a temperature lower than a softening point of the brittle material substrate and, also, a region in the vicinity of the heated region is continuously cooled, ~~[[so]]~~ such that a blind crack is formed along said line to be scribed, the method comprising:

splitting light from a light source with a polarizing beam splitter based on a polarization state;

allowing light in a specific polarization direction, having transmitted through said polarizing beam splitter, to enter the region of the blind crack formation in the vicinity of the cooled region on the surface of said brittle material substrate via an optical fiber;

returning the light reflected by the blind crack to said polarizing beam splitter via said optical fiber;

receiving the light split by said polarizing beam splitter from the reflected light from the blind crack with a light reception element; and

determining whether a level of light receiving signal obtained from said light reception element is between predetermined thresholds, whereby the brittle material substrate is scribed while determining a condition of the blind crack formation of the brittle material substrate.

10 - 14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) An automated breaking line system for a brittle material

substrate, the automated breaking line system comprising:

a device for breaking the brittle material substrate; and

5 a scribing device for scribing a brittle material substrate, said scribing device continuously heating a region along a line to be scribed on a surface of the brittle material substrate at a temperature lower than a softening point of the brittle material substrate and continuously cooling a region in the vicinity of the heated region such that a blind crack along said line to be scribed is formed, said scribing device including:

a light source for emitting light;

10 a polarizing beam splitter splitting light from said light source based on a polarization state, said polarizing beam splitter transmitting light in a polarization direction;

an optical fiber receiving light split via said polarizing beam splitter, said optical fiber guiding said light split via said polarizing beam splitter such that light enters the region of the blind crack formation in an area of the cooled region on the surface of the brittle material substrate, said optical fiber receiving the light reflected by the blind crack such that said optical fiber transmits said light to said polarizing beam splitter;

15 a light reception element receiving reflected light from said blind crack via said polarizing beam splitter; and

a determination unit including a window comparator to determine whether an amount of light received via said light reception element is within predetermined thresholds, wherein a formation state of the blind crack is determined based on an output from said determination unit.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A scribing device in accordance with claim 1, wherein said shape state of the blind crack is continuously determined based on said output from said determination part when the brittle substrate material is scribed.

18. (Previously Presented) A scribing device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the brittle substrate material is not scribed when said level of light receiving signal obtained from said light reception element is not within said predetermined thresholds.

19. (Previously Presented) A scribing method in accordance with claim 9, wherein said condition of the blind crack formation of the brittle material substrate is continuously determined.

20. (Previously Presented) A scribing method in accordance with claim 9, wherein the brittle substrate material is not scribed when said level of light receiving signal obtained from said light reception element is not within predetermined thresholds.

21. (Previously Presented) An automated breaking line system in accordance with claim 15, wherein said shape state of the blind crack is continuously determined based on said

output from said determination part when the brittle substrate material is scribed.

22. (Previously Presented) An automated breaking line system in accordance with claim 15, wherein the brittle substrate material is not scribed when said level of light receiving signal obtained from said light reception element is not within predetermined thresholds.